

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01706 291338Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EUR-12 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 ACDA-12 OMB-01

TRSE-00 SY-05 AID-05 SSM-03 MCE-00 /099 W

-----021808 291344Z /72

O 291225Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7328

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

CNO WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

SECDEF WASHDC

21AF MCGUIRE AFB NJ/IN

22AF TRAVIS AFB CA/IN

HQ MAC SCOTT AFB IL/INO

CINCMAC SCOTT AFB IL

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE

CSA WASHDC

RUEFHQA/CSAF WASHDC

435 TAW RHEIN MAIN AB GE/IN

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

DET 4 435 TAW RAMSTEIN AB GE

MIL ALFT CEN EUR RAMSTEIN AB GE/IN/CC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1706

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, LE

SUBJECT: AIRPORT SECURITY

REF: (A) STATE 079579 (DTG 282049Z MAR 78) (B) USDAO BEIRUT

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0169 MAR 78, DTG 281442Z MAR 78

1. ACCORDING TO LEBANESE AIR FORCE COMMANDER, RAYAK AIRFIELD PRESENTS NO TECHNICAL OR SECURITY PROBLEMS FOR USE BY USAF AIRCRAFT, BUT LOGISTICALLY IT WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT FOR EMBASSY TO SUPPORT.

2. UPDATE ON SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE OF BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT CONTAINED IN REFTEL B WHICH IS BEING RETRANSMITTED TO STATE AND ESSENTIALLY STATES THAT THERE ARE SOME RISKS INVOLVED IN USING BIA WHICH CAN BE MINIMIZED BY SECURITY PRECAUTIONS, BUT WE KNOW OF NO DIRECTED OR PLANNED TERRORIST THREAT AGAINST USAF AIRCRAFT. FURTHER, AFTER EXAMINING AVAILABLE FACILITIES, EMBASSY AND DATT BELIEVE THAT IT NOW ADVISABLE TO BILLET USAF GROUND CREWS AT LAF AIR FORCE HELICOPTER BASE LOCATED AT BIA RATHER THAN RUNNING RISK OF HAVING THEM TRAVEL BACK AND FORTH ALONG DANGEROUS ROUTE BETWEEN HOTEL AND AIRPORT.

3. AMBASSADOR'S RECOMMENDATION: AS INDICATED IN OUR 1686, WE SHARE DEPARTMENT'S UNEASINESS ABOUT USING BEIRUT AIRPORT. IT IS TOO EASY FOR A PALESTINIAN DISSIDENT TO FIRE AT AIRCRAFT DURING LANDING OR TAKEOFF. WE CAN PUT ANY NUMBER OF GUARDS ON AIRCRAFT, BUT WE CANNOT CONTROL FIRING FROM SABRA AND SHATILA CAMPS. IT WOULD BE INCONVENIENT FOR ALL CONCERNED, BUT RAYAK WOULD BE A SAFER ALTERNATIVE AND WE RECOMMEND THAT WE USE IT INSTEAD OF BIA. EVEN RAYAK IS NOT COMPLETELY SAFE, BUT IT IS BETTER THAN BIA. PLEASE ADVISE GROUND SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS ASAP SO WE CAN COORDINATE SCENE WITH LEBANESE AIR FORCE.

PARKER

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Message Attributes

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TAGS: MARR, LE
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